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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 000362

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT, WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM ACTION GROUP -- GUATEMALAN
RESPONSE

REF: STATE 14279

Classified By: PolMilOff Rob Copley for reason 1.5 (b) and (c).

11. (C) Summary: Few of the G-8 diplomatic missions to Guatemala have counter-terrorism (CT) programs, and we detected no overlap among them. None of the other missions have conducted formal assessments of Guatemala's CT needs. However, there is a consensus that Guatemala's greatest CT weakness is a lack of coordination within the government that results in lack of control. End Summary.

12. (C) The embassies of Great Britain, Japan, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland in Guatemala are not currently engaged in any programs that enhance CT capabilities and have no CT programs planned for 2004. Per refTel instructions, in addition to G-8 embassies, we included Spain, Australia, and Switzerland, and note that Russia and Australia do not have embassies in Guatemala. Information on the limited Italian, French, Spanish and Canadian programs is provided below.

Italy

13. (C) Commercial Attache Pino Carabalona said his government has no bilateral CT programs in Guatemala but does provide one Italian official through the European Union to work with the Guatemalan Police.

France

14. (C) DCM Laurent Martin told us his government has no CT programs planned for 2004, nor does it have any current law enforcement programs that enhance Guatemalan CT capabilities. Martin said that his government provides some training to the SAAS (Guatemalan Secret Service), but he does not consider the training CT related.

Spain

15. (C) Security Chief Gerardo Otero told us his government held a conference in Spain in 2003 to discuss a bilateral CT treaty and that in November, 2004 Spain would host a conference in Bolivia on the globalization of organized crime and terrorism. Otero said Guatemalan officials would attend. Spain has provided general assistance to the Police Academy in the past and has a pending GOG request to continue that assistance, but Otero had no information as to whether the request would be approved by his government. In a slight difference of opinion on Guatemala's CT needs, Otero cited lack of awareness, saying that Guatemalan officials underestimate the global nature of the threat due to misperceptions based on the small role they play and the relatively low number of special interest aliens they believe transit Guatemalan territory.

Canada

16. (C) Political Counselor Ginette Martin told us that Canada channels its CT programs through multilateral organizations such as the OAS, and said that this support tends to focus on the softer side of security (Note: the German, Swiss, and Japanese representatives all said they work through multilateral organizations also, but none could provide details. End note). Martin mentioned a Canadian fund for institutional reform that has not been tapped due to problems with Guatemala's Attorney General. She said the fund could be redirected to strengthen capabilities in the security area, although not specifically to CT programs. Martin added that her embassy was concluding the first phase of a 3-year, \$400,000 initiative aimed at improving crime scene investigation by the Guatemalan police. Martin also said that Canada has funded expert exchanges among security officials in support of the "Framework Treaty on Democratic Security." Martin further stated that Guatemalan authorities have been included in witness protection and money laundering programs conducted in Mexico by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but she had no further details. Martin felt that the Berger administration is too new, at this stage, for any realistic discussion of its unmet CT needs.

Consensus on Needs

17. (C) Aside from the Canadian and Spanish representatives, all of the other officials agreed that Guatemala's greatest CT need is to establish control over its territory. Nearly everyone had examples of serious security problems at Guatemala's airports and borders.

18. (C) Comment: Most members of the CTAG represented in Guatemala are important donors to economic development and Peace Accord-related bilateral assistance programs. While there has been growing interest in strengthening cooperation in fighting transnational crime, and terrorism specifically, assistance efforts remain focused largely on economic development issues. We will exploit the growing interest of CTAG embassies in Guatemala in increasing coordination on enhancing the rule of law and fighting transnational crime.

WHARTON